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SUBJECT: EAST JAVA GOVERNOR'S ELECTION: WEAK PARTY LOYALTY LEADS TO
RUNOFF ELECTION

REF: SURABAYA 51: POLITICS IN EAST JAVA'S LARGEST MUSLIM ORGANIZATION

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This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Based on quick count results, it appears likely East Java governor's election will go to a second round after no candidate garnered 30% of the vote in a five ticket race. Soekarwo-Syaifullah Yusuf -- supported by the National Mandate Party (PAN), Party Democrat (PD), and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) -- and Khofifah Indar Parawansa-Mudjiono -- supported by the United Development Party (PPP), the Patriot Party, and a coalition of smaller parties -- received the most first-round votes and will compete head-to-head in the runoff. It's unclear when the runoff will take place, as election officials admit to logistical difficulties and limitations created by the upcoming Ramadan holiday period. In a race dominated by candidate popularity rather than party loyalty, the runoff is expected to be very close. The election results offered little comfort to the largest national parties (Golkar, PDI-P, and PKB) after all three sets of candidates were eliminated. As voters once again demonstrate their willingness to ignore party dictates, national party leaders will need to reevaluate their strategies for success in advance of the 2009 parliamentary and presidential elections. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The results of the July 23 East Java governor's election continue to be analyzed as the final votes are counted. According to quick counts conducted by several polling institutions, the team of Soekarwo-Syaifullah Yusuf garnered the most votes, with the team of Khofifah Indar Parawansa-Mudjiono coming second. Although one quick count put Soekarwo above the necessary 30% threshold to avoid a runoff, all other quick votes suggest a runoff will be necessary. The first round eliminated the candidates from Golkar, Megawati's Indonesian Party of Struggle (PDI-P) and the Gus Dur faction of the National Awakening Party (PKB). The East Java Election Commission plans to officially announce the results on August 4.

Personal Popularity Trumps Party Loyalty

¶3. (SBU) Most observers credit Soekarwo's and Khofifah's strong showings on personal popularity rather than party loyalty. The disarray within Gus Dur's PKB and competing centers of power within Nadhlatul Ulama (NU) helped fracture this traditionally solid block of votes. Khofifah, head of the women's division of NU and a former Minister of Women's Empowerment, reportedly garnered almost 33% of PKB voters and drew the majority of

female votes. Long-time civil administrator Soekarwo, teamed with Gus Dur's estranged nephew Syaifullah Yusuf, who is also the head of National NU's youth organization Ansor, garnered support from across the political spectrum.

14. (SBU) The East Java elections offered little good news for the largest national parties Golkar, PDI-P, and PKB. The Golkar team, pairing the East Java party chairman and former Vice Governor Soenarjo with former East Java NU Chairman Ali Maschan Moesa, finished a disappointing fourth, garnering less than 20% of the vote. Reportedly, only 50% of Golkar voters supported their candidate. Soenarjo was an uninspiring candidate who generated little enthusiasm with the party or among East Java's voters. Additionally, running mate Ali Maschan's disagreements with NU clerics probably limited his ability to draw NU voters to Soenarjo's cause. Gus Dur's hand-picked PKB candidate Achmady, the little known regent of Mojokerto, finished dead last, with less than 8% of the vote. Only 16% of PKB voters supported the party's candidate; 32% supported Khofifah and 30% supported Soekarwo. PDI-P's candidate Sutjipto fared better, with approximately 21% of the total vote and solid party-member support, but he did not attract disaffected voters from other parties. PKS, known for the loyalty of its cadres, was not unified behind the party's candidate -- only 48% voted for Soekarwo; 24% voted for Khofifah. Once again, however, as a party, PKS threw its support behind a winning team.

Prospects for the Runoff

15. (SBU) Prospects for both candidates in a runoff are unclear. Soekarwo's team believes they can attract supporters from Golkar and PDI-P, whose candidate Sutjipto finished a close third. Khofifah supporters believe she will draw support from traditional conservative voters in the horseshoe shaped region of Tapal Kuda and the island of Madura, although both Khofifah and Soekarwo did well in these areas during the first round.

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Voter turnout in the first round was lower than expected -- 61%.

In Surabaya, turnout was even lower -- 50%. Voter apathy may increase further. Election officials suggest that a runoff could not be organized in less than three months; they anticipate holding the election in late October, after the fasting month of Ramadan. Complicating matters further, the election commission's term expires at the end of September.

MCCLELLAND